

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 16, line 32 with the following amended paragraph:

The unitary waist elastic element 68 may be provided by 1) stretching an elastic element, 2) attaching the stretched elastic element to a waist region of an absorbent article, 3) releasing the stretched elastic element, allowing the stretched elastic element to retract thereby providing a shirred, gathered waist region (as shown in Fig. 6). This process of providing this unitary waist elastic element may be performed by the method and apparatus as disclosed in the concurrently filed patent application Ser. No. _____ entitled Ser. No. 10/750,016 entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR APPLYING AN ELASTIC MEMBER by Hoffman et al. which was contemporaneously filed Dec. 30, 2003 (~~attorney docket No. 18,996~~), the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in a manner that is consistent (not contradictory) herewith. Alternatively, the unitary waist elastic element 68 may be provided by 1) providing a latent elastic element, 2) attaching the latent elastic element to a waist region of an absorbent article, 3) activating the latent elastic element, causing the latent elastic element to retract thereby providing a shirred, gathered waist region (as shown in Fig. 6).